

Senate Bill 338

By: Senators Thomas of the 10th and Thomas of the 54th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 11 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating to emergency medical services personnel, so as to provide for legislative findings;  
3 to provide for state grants to community partnerships for the purchase of automated external  
4 defibrillators and for training in the use of such defibrillators; to provide for related matters;  
5 to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Article 3 of Chapter 11 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
9 emergency medical services personnel, is amended by inserting immediately following Code  
10 Section 31-11-53.2 a new Code Section 31-11-53.3 to read as follows:

11 "31-11-53.3.

12 (a) The General Assembly makes the following findings:

13 (1) Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Georgia;

14 (2) A cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival drops 10 percent for every minute that  
15 passes before his or her heart is returned to normal rhythm;

16 (3) Because most cardiac arrest victims are initially in ventricular fibrillation, and the  
17 only treatment for ventricular fibrillation is defibrillation, prompt access to defibrillation  
18 to return the heart to normal rhythm is essential;

19 (4) Lifesaving technology, the automated external defibrillator, has been developed to  
20 allow trained lay rescuers to respond to cardiac arrest by using this simple device to  
21 shock the heart into normal rhythm.

22 (5) Those people who are likely to be first on the scene of a cardiac arrest situation in  
23 many communities, particularly smaller and rural communities, lack sufficient numbers  
24 of automated external defibrillators to respond to cardiac arrest in a timely manner;

1 (6) The American Heart Association estimates that more than 50,000 deaths could be  
2 prevented each year if defibrillators were more widely available to designated responders;  
3 and

4 (7) Legislation should be enacted to encourage greater public access to automated  
5 external defibrillators in communities across the United States.

6 (b) The State and Local Governmental Operations Committee of the Senate, acting  
7 through and in concert with the Department of Human Resources, shall award grants to  
8 community partnerships that meet the requirements of subsection (c) of this Code section  
9 to enable such partnerships to purchase equipment and provide training as provided for in  
10 said subsection (c).

11 (c) A community partnership meets the requirements of this Code section if such  
12 partnership:

13 (1) Is composed of local emergency response entities such as community training  
14 facilities, local emergency responders, fire and rescue departments, police, community  
15 hospitals, and local nonprofit entities and for-profit entities concerned about cardiac arrest  
16 survival rates;

17 (2) Evaluates the local community emergency response times to assess whether they  
18 meet the standards established by national public health organizations such as the  
19 American Heart Association and the American Red Cross; and

20 (3) Submits to the Department of Human Resources an application at such time, in such  
21 manner, and containing such information as the department may require.

22 (d) Any grant awarded to a community partnership under this Code section shall be used  
23 to:

24 (1) Purchase automated external defibrillators that have been approved or cleared for  
25 marketing by the Food and Drug Administration; and

26 (2) Provide defibrillator and basic life support training in automated external defibrillator  
27 usage through the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, or other  
28 nationally recognized training courses.

29 (e) Not later than four years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the commissioner  
30 shall prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of the General Assembly a report  
31 containing data relating to whether the increased availability of defibrillators has affected  
32 survival rates in the communities in which grantees under this Code section operated. The  
33 procedures under which the commissioner obtains data and prepares the report under this  
34 subsection shall not impose an undue burden on program participants under this Code  
35 section."

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**SECTION 2.**

2 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.